

In the Specification

Please amend the paragraphs of the specification as indicated below under the appropriate italicized heading:

Page 8, paragraph 2 replace the paragraph with the following:

Figure 5 shows the best match of amino acids sequence of *aiiA* gene product (AiiA) (SEQ. ID NO:3) to the consensus aspartyl proteases active site motif (Asp) (SEQ ID NO:4). Symbol: X, any amino acid. A vertical line indicates perfect match.

Page 17, paragraph 2 replace the paragraph with the following:

Database searches showed that the *aiiA* gene has no significant similarity to known sequences in the major databases (GenBank, European Molecular Biology Laboratory, Protein Information Resources, and Swiss-Prot) by FASTA and BLAST analysis of either nucleotide or peptide sequence level, suggesting that *AiiA* is a novel protein. Consensus protein motif search using the Genetics Computer Group (Madison, WI) MOTIF program showed that a short peptide sequence, "ILVDTGMPESAV" (SEQ ID NO:3) from position 47 to 58 in AiiA, is similar but not identical to the aspartyl protein active site signature pattern (Rawlings and Barrett, 1995) (Fig. 5).

Serial No. 10/019,661
Preliminary Amendment
Page 3

In the Sequence Listing

Please insert the attached initial Sequence Listing.